

### Ask for Help:

It is important to recognize that others will need to mourn your loss, too. They often hurt not only for themselves, but also for you. You may find yourself avoiding contact with others, but, talking with family and friends about your baby will help it become more real in your mind. Sharing helps others to be more sensitive to your needs. Some family members and friends do not know what to say or do; therefore, they unintentionally make your grief more difficult by ignoring your loss or saying hurtful things. Well-meaning people may offer clichés or platitudes that minimize your loss. They simply do not understand how you feel. You can, and should, set boundaries. Forgive their ignorance, but tell them your boundaries. You may want to have family or friends redirect hurtful comments to help establish an emotionally safe environment. Ask your friends and family to be patient with you. Share with them that you're not sure how long it will take to feel better again.

Allow your loved ones to help. Accept meals, help around the house, and offers to babysit. It is hard enough just to make it through each day. Letting others help can lift burdens from you. It allows them to contribute when there is little more that they can do. Don't be afraid to ask for their help. Feel free to tell them exactly what they can do to help you. They are looking for any way to comfort you. Be specific. Ask them to help with grocery shopping, making meals, or just spend time with you.

### Focus on Your Faith:

Know that your baby may not be physically with you for this time on earth, but your baby still exists. Incorporate your child in your life. Be patient with yourself, but know that although you will always miss your baby, it will not hurt this badly forever. In time, you will find your new normal, and laugh and have fun again.

To join our on-line support group which meets the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Thursday of each month contact [Kim Kelley @](#)  
(513)619-0100 or email [Kim@heavensgain.org](mailto:Kim@heavensgain.org)

*We are sorry that your baby has died. Those of us involved in Heaven's Gain Ministry understand first-hand how devastating the loss of a child can be, and are sorry for all you are going through. Blessings and healing – Donna and Jim Murphy - HGM Founders*

## A Mother's Grief



## Support for Mothers suffering the loss of a child

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*We want you to know that we understand the importance of your baby's life and death. We hope to explain some of the feelings and decisions you will face in the days ahead, so that you don't lose heart as you go through this grieving process.*

### **Understanding Your Feelings:**

You are suffering from a great loss. Words are not enough to express the unconditional love that exists between a mother and her child. Your precious child's life has worth. We affirm the dignity of your baby. As you travel the path of grief, you need to mourn the great loss of your baby and remember the dreams and hopes you had for him/her.

Know that grieving is hard work and takes time. Don't rush it. Grief may feel like a great weight coming down on you. It may be hard to concentrate or feel interested in the people and things that used to take up your time. You may feel anxious and unsettled, unable to make the simplest decisions, but you may find that you feel a little better as you begin to make some choices. This is because you are caring for your baby.

You may be burdened with a sense of guilt. Although this is common in the grieving process, it is unwarranted. Nothing you did or thought willed this tragedy. Your baby never knew anything but your love. You've loved your baby in the best way you could.

There is no "right" way to grieve. Even if you and your husband/partner are very close, you will discover differences in how you handle grief. This discovery might be unpleasant. Be careful not to judge your husband/partner and the quality of his grief. It is common to experience overwhelming feelings of: anger, sadness, bitterness, confusion, hopelessness, and loneliness. Try to talk about what you are feeling or write down your thoughts.

### **A Mother's Nature:**

Your body may actually ache for your baby. Many mothers physically yearn to hold their babies or to nurse them. You may have a very real feeling of the baby kicking or feel sure you heard the baby cry. A lot of mothers experience *empty arms syndrome*, which is feeling physical weight on your arms where your baby should be. Because you have truly lost a part of yourself; it feels very much like an amputation. Some mothers have desperate, urgent thoughts about their baby, or they believe it would be better to be with their baby. While this is normal, thoughts of suicide that won't go away are cause for concern. You must discuss these feelings with a professional who understands grief. At any time, worrying about "going crazy" can add to your burden. It can be a great relief to learn that the symptoms of grief you are experiencing are natural and normal behaviors people employ to cope with the death of someone they love.

**A Mother's Milk:** Your milk may come even without your baby. Some mothers have leaked every time they heard a baby cry. It will eventually stop, and by then you may have become accustomed to it and may feel like you have lost the only physical connection left with your baby. This is perfectly natural. To ease some of the physical discomfort, we suggest wearing a tight-fitting sports bra, applying ice packs and cold cabbage leaves. You may want to apply Cabo Cream or stand facing away from the water of a hot shower to reduce breast milk and/or engorgement.

### **Know that you are not alone:**

Pregnancy loss is not that unusual. One in four pregnancies is lost in the first trimester, one in thirty-three babies die in the second trimester, and one in 160 babies in the third trimester. Know that you are not alone. There are people available who understand suffering from this kind of loss. We encourage you to talk with other bereaved parents, healthcare providers, doctors, and counselors. Heaven's Gain APPL's (Advocates for Parents of Perinatal Loss) are trained, certified, and available to help you through this difficult journey. Although we do not give medical advice, Heaven's Gain Ministries' free support services are available before, during and after the birth of your precious baby. Our APPL's offer non-medical information and help for those suffering pregnancy loss at any stage of pregnancy: miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant loss. We welcome phone calls to answer your questions and encourage you to visit our website for a wealth of information. Research shows that support services, and being able to tell your story are very important to the healing of parents after losing a baby. Heavens Gain Ministries offers an on-line support group on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday every month at 7:00 pm EST. You may prefer to find a support group in your area. There are several other support groups available including: *Rachel's Gift, Star Legacy, SHARE or Faces of Loss/ Faces of Hope.*

### **What you can do for your baby:**

When facing fetal or infant loss, parents should be fully informed and not be rushed into any decisions. Naturally, we advise you to listen to your doctor's advice. The best and most informed choices help enhance the short but very important time with your baby and can provide a loving encounter with your baby. These special and meaningful moments help create lasting memories that bring comfort over time. Consider saving mementos and making a small baby book or memory box.

Just remember this is your baby. Don't let others discourage you from naming your child as you choose. You should honor your child how you want. Spend time with your baby. You will never get this time back. Some parents elect to take photos with their child. If you have other children, consider whether they would like to say goodbye too. Also, grandparents may appreciate this time with their grandchild.